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***NEWS From:***

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**Congressman Mike Honda**

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FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA

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**Rep. Honda Advances Funding for Bay Area Wetland Restoration  
Study Through Key Committee**

***Begins First Phase of Restoration of Cargill Salt Ponds to Wetlands***

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2002 — The U.S. House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a resolution sponsored by Rep. Mike Honda (D-San Jose) for \$100,000 to fund the initial study for the restoration of the Cargill salt ponds into wetlands along the shoreline of Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Alameda counties.

The study will assess the environmental restoration and flood control work along the South San Francisco Bay shoreline and will determine Federal interest in measures to provide comprehensive tidal and flood damage reduction in light of Silicon Valley development, as well as ecosystem restoration.

“The restoration of the Cargill Salt Ponds into wetlands is one of the most ambitious ecosystem restoration projects in the country,” said Honda. “I support this project and am proud to do my part in moving the environmental restoration to the next level. As this project moves forward, it is also critical to study the potential for flooding of neighborhoods and businesses surrounding the waterfront. I will work so that at the end of the day, land surrounding the wetlands is safe from potential flooding, and the restored habitat will become a place for families to enjoy the natural environment as it originally existed.”

Funding for the Secretary of the Army to conduct this study will become final upon the passage of the Energy and Water Development appropriations bill, along with adequate funding levels.

### **Background**

On May 29, 2002, a historic deal was announced in which a private company, Cargill, would sell 16,500 acres of salt ponds in the South San Francisco Bay to the public for \$100 million. The salt ponds along the waterfront of Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Alameda counties would be restored to wetlands for the benefit of several endangered species and a multitude of other creatures and plants, after more than 100 years of human disturbance. This agreement involved U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the State of California and a number of private foundations, and was brokered by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

Along with the transformation of the industrial site into wetlands comes the challenge and responsibility to ensure that the removal of the existing levees does not result in the threat of increased tidal flooding. The salt ponds stretch 20 miles, spanning the waterfront of three counties. In Santa Clara County alone there are 4,000 parcels that can be impacted by flooding along the South San Francisco Bay shoreline. These include 2,700 residential, 121 manufacturing, 185 industrial, and 79 agriculture facilities, 136 shopping areas, 44 public schools, and 6 transportation and utilities networks—all located in the tidal flood hazard area.

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